

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5486

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 8646

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET FT

SUBJECT: VISIT OF TFAI OPPOSITION GROUP

REF: (A) ADDIS 6192 (NOTAL); (B) A-96 OF 5/30/75(NOTAL)

1. IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "ETHIOPIA SUPPORTS INDEPENDENCE FOR TFAI," THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE "ETHIOPIAN HERALD" PUBLISHED A JULY 15 MOFA STATEMENT REPORTING THE JULY 12-14 VISIT BY A DELEGATION FROM THE "AFRICAN PEOPLES' LEAGUE FOR INDEPENDENCE" (LPAI) OF THE TFAI. THE FIVE-MAN DELEGATION WAS LED BY AHMED DINI (AFAR) AND LPAI PRESIDENT HASSAN GOULED (ISSA), LONG-TIME OPPONENTS OF TFAI PRESIDENT ALI AREF BOURHAN (CF. REF B).

2. ACCORDING TO MOFA STATEMENT, THE DELEGATION INFORMED ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE LPAI AND OF ITS AIM TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE FOR THE TFAI. DURING THE DISCUSSIONS, THE STATEMENT CONTINUES, ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS REITERATED ETHIOPIA'S POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR SUCH INDEPENDENCE "IF THAT IS THE WISH OF THE PEOPLE."

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ETHIOPIA, IT SAID, "RECOGNIZES THE INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI..."

(AND) WILL RECOGNIZE AND RESPECT THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE TFAI." THE STATEMENT NOTED THAT PMAC CHAIRMAN TEFERI BANTE HAD ALREADY STATED ETHIOPIA'S SUPPORT FOR THE TERRITORY'S INDEPENDENCE ON AFRICA DAY LAST MAY (CF. PARA 3, REF A).

3. THE STATEMENT CONTRASTED ETHIOPIA'S POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE WITH "THE CLAIM THAT ANOTHER NEIGHBORING STATE (I.E., SOMALIA) TO TFAI TERRITORY HAD ENSHRINED IN ITS CONSTITUTION," (I.E., ANNEXATION).

4. THE DELEGATION REPORTEDLY VISITED 12 ARAB COUNTRIES AND FRANCE TO EXPLAIN ITS POSITION. IT ALSO INTENDS TO VISIT KAMPALA DURING THE OAU SUMMIT TO SEEK SUPPORT FOR TFAI INDEPENDENCE.

5. ACCORDING TO A MOFA OFFICIAL, THE LPAI DELEGATION WAS VISITING MANY COUNTRIES BECAUSE IT FEARS THAT OPPOSING ETHIOPIAN AND SOMALI CLAIMS TO THE TFAI WOULD CREATE CONFUSION IN OAU DISCUSSIONS AND DELAY INDEPENDENCE. THE EPMG, HE SAID, SIMPLY RITERATED ITS YEAR OLD POSITION ON TFAI INDEPENDENCE. THE DELEGATION IS ALSO SCHEDULED TO GO TO SOMALIA.

6. FRENCH COUNSELOR BLOUIN TOLD EMBOFF THAT THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE VISIT OR STATEMENT THAT WOULD TROUBLE THE FRENCH. ALTHOUGH THE EPMG OBVIOUSLY PREFERRED WORKING WITH THE PRESENT POWER STRUCTURE IN THE TFAI, IT WAS NOT OPPOSED TO THE LPAI AS LONG AS IT WAS NOT INFLUENCED BY SOMALIA. THE EPMG THEREFORE, PROFITTED BY THE LPAI VISIT TO ATTACK SOMALIA'S "ACQUISITIVE" POSITION RE THE TFAI WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PROCLAIMING ETHIOPIA'S POSITION TO BE FOR INDEPENDENCE (AND ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS).

7. COMMENT: THE QUESTION OF THE TFAI WILL CERTAINLY ARISE AT THE OAU MEETINGS IN KAMPALA. THE EPMG HAS SHREWDLY USED THE LPAI VISIT TO STEAL A MARCH ON THE SOMALIS. AN EXPERIENCED FOREIGN ADVISOR TO THE ETHIOPIAN MOFA HAS POINTED OUT TO US THAT EPMG SUPPORT FOR TFAI SELF-DETERMINATION LIKELY WILL PROVE EVANESCENT. MOREOVER, AS HE PUT IT, "SELF DETERMINATION IS ONLY ONE ELEMENT AMONG THOSE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DETERMINING THE DISPOSITION OF A TERRITORY WHOSE DESTINY IS ENSHRINED IN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS." WE BELIEVE THIS TO BE AN ALLUSION TO OLD ACCORDS OF RECORD BETWEEN ETHIOPIA'S EMPERORS, LOCAL TRADITIONAL RULERS AND

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FRENCH, ITALY, ETC.
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